

THE GRAMMAR OF DOING AND UNDERGOING IN KOREAN*

M. H. Klaiman

This paper concerns some properties of the Korean sentential construction involving the verbal marker *-hi-*. A number of Korean verbs have alternate forms without and with this marker, e.g. *mək/mək-hi-* 'eat.' The verbal form with *-hi-* is sometimes said to be the 'passive' of the unmarked form, since the subjects of sentences whose verbs have the marker *-hi-* often correspond semantically to undergoers of the sententially denoted activities. It is important, however, that there are limitations on what can constitute the subject of an 'active' Korean sentence. Some such constraints are reflected in the preference for the use of the marked verbal form in *-hi-* in the expression of certain types of action; e.g. *na-nin tol-e cha-yəss-ta* 'I stumbled on a rock' (literally, 'I was kicked by a rock'); compare the unacceptable unmarked counterpart **tol-i na-lil chass-ta* 'The rock kicked me.' This paper seeks to account for the distribution of *-hi-* in Korean by investigating the conditions on what can constitute subject in a Korean sentence.

This paper is about conditions for the selection of subjects for certain Korean verbs. The verbs in question are the ones which show an alternation between an unmarked stem and the marking of the stem with the so-called passive formant.¹ I take the basic shape of this formant to be *-hi-*, although the so-called passive stem is irregular for some specific verbs as we will note below.

The passive verbal stem marker *-hi-* is very similar in shape to the causative stem marker; some verbs have passive and causative stems of identical shape, such as the verb 'to read' (*ilk-hi-* means both 'cause to read' or 'be read'). In a few verbs, the passive and causative stems are, however, formally distinguished (e.g. *mək-i-* 'cause to eat' vs. *mək-hi-* 'be eaten'). I believe that the basic shapes of the causative and passive stem formants probably can and should be distinguished, the former being of the shape *-i-* and the latter of the shape *-hi-*. For the purposes of this paper I am, in any event, concerned only with so-called passive verbal bases in alternation with so-called active, i.e. unmarked verbal bases. In Korean, this alternation, unlike the noncausative/causative alternation, is confined to transitive verbs; that is, to verbs which can take nominal objects marked with the case ending *-il/-lil*.

The so-called passive stem formant *-hi-* has a variant form *-i-* which co-occurs with verbal bases ending in either a vowel or in the sound *h*:

(1) 차/차ㅇ	cha-/cha-i-	'kick/be kicked'
싸/싸ㅇ	ssa-/ssa-i-	'pack/be packed'
쓰/쓰ㅇ	ssi-/ssi-i	'write/be written' or 'use/be used'
놓/놓ㅇ	noh-/noh-i-	'lower, put down/be lowered'
보/보ㅇ	po-/po-i-	'see/be seen'

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¹ Many Korean verbs lack the alternation under discussion. It is not yet clear to me how productive the alternation may be in present-day Korean.

There is another variant form *-li-* which co-occurs with verbal bases ending or having a variant form ending in the sound *l*:

(2)	팔/팔리	phal-/phal-li-	'sell/be sold'
	열/열리	yəl-/yəl-li-	'open/be opened'
	물/물리	mul-/mul-li-	'bite/be bitten'
	듣(들)/들리	tīt-(tīl-)/tīl-li-	'hear/be heard'
	부르(불)/불리	pulī-(pul-)/pul-li-	'call/be called'

In the case of most other verbal bases, the so-called passive stem formant exhibits its basic shape *-hi-*, as shown in (3). However, for some verbal bases, the formant exhibits an irregular alternative shape *-ki-* as illustrated in (4). Most such bases that I am aware of end in a palatal consonant. (Compare the regular bases *ic-*, *mac-* and *kkoc-*, in (3), with irregular *ccic-* in (4).)

In addition to the irregular forms in *-ki-*, I know of some irregular instances of the *-i-* variant, as in case of *səkk-/səkk-i-* 'to mix/be mixed' and *tīl-/tīl-i-* 'to carry/be carried.'

(3)	먹/먹히	mək-/mək-hi-	'eat/be eaten'
	박/박히	pak-/pak-hi-	'attach/be attached'
	막/막히	mak-/mak-hi-	'obstruct/be obstructed'
	반/반히	pat-/pat-hi-	'collide or strike/be collided with or struck'
	잡/잡히	cap-/cap-hi-	'catch/be caught'
	밟/밟히	palp-/palp-hi-	'step on/be stepped on'
	잊/잊히	ic-/ic-hi-	'forget/be forgotten'
	맞/맞히	mac-/mac-hi-	'target (something)/be targetted'
	꽃/꽃히	kkoc-/kkoc-hi-	'pierce/be pierced'
(4)	쫓/쫓기	ccoch-/ccoch-ki-	'chase/be chased'
	찢/찢기	ccic-/ccic-ki-	'tear/be torn'

I am concerned in this paper not so much with the form of the unmarked/marked stem alternation in Korean as with the alternating uses of the two verbal stems, as suggested in (5a,b):

- (5) a. 저 사람이 그 아이를 쫓고 있어요.
 cə salam-i ki ai-lil ccoch-ko issəyo
 that man-Nom that boy-Obj chasing is
 'The man is chasing the boy.'
- b. 그 아이가 저 사람에게 쫓기고 있어요.
 ki ai-ka cə salam-eke ccoch-ki-ko issəyo
 that boy-Nom that man-by chase-*hi*-ing is
 'The boy is being chased by the man.'

Although examples (5a,b) are glossed by English active and passive sentences respectively, the unmarked and marked stem constructions in Korean cannot be con-

sidered simple variants of one another as the active and passive are said to be in English. In the first place, there are many instances in Korean where only the marked verbal base can occur, while the corresponding unmarked verbal construction is unacceptable:

- (6) a. *시간이 나를 쫓고 있어요.
 *sikan-i na-lil ccoch-ko issəyo
 time-Nom I-Obj chasing is
 'Time is chasing me.'
- b. 나는 시간에 쫓기고 있어요.
 na-nin sikan-e ccoch-ki-ko issəyo
 I-Nom topic time-by chase-*hi*-ing is (am)
 'I am being chased by time.'

If (6b) is to be called a 'passive,' one has no choice but to conclude that the sentence lacks a corresponding active. Now it sometimes happens in English that a verb occurs only in the passive; this is often the case of so-called 'unpassives' like *unimpressed*, e.g. *He was unimpressed by her* (cf. the unacceptable **She unimpressed him*). In Korean, however, a given verb may be acceptable in some contexts either with or without the formant *-hi-*, as seen in (5), and in other contexts *-hi-* may be obligatory, as in (6). Furthermore, there may be still other contexts in which the marked stem alternate of a particular verb becomes unacceptable, as in (7):

- (7) a. 남자가 공을 쫓고 있어요.
 namca-ka koŋ-il ccoch-ko issəyo
 man-Nom ball-Obj chasing is
 'A/The man is chasing a/the ball.'
- b. *공이 남자에게 쫓기고 있어요.
 *koŋ-i namca-eke ccoch-ki-ko issəyo
 ball-Nom man-by chase-*hi*-ing is
 'A/The ball is being chased by a/the man.'

The alternation between the use of the marked and unmarked constructions in Korean seems to be related to certain constraints on what kind of participant, in what kind of action, can be assigned the grammatical status of subject. In English, it is sometimes said that the subject relates to the sententially denoted action as doer or performer in the active, and as undergoer in the passive. In Korean, on the other hand, the determination of subject seems to be tied in with the idea of being plausibly in control of vs. not plausibly in control of the situation expressed in a sentence. This is suggested by a comparison of the several pairs of examples given in (5)-(7). All the examples involve an activity of chasing and two participants, one of which is the undergoer of the action and the other of which I shall speak of as the source of the action. In (5) we see that an animate entity can be represented in the sentential subject position either as being the source of the action (5a) or as being the undergoer (5b). (6) and (7) suggest, on the other hand, that an inanimate entity cannot

be represented in subject position either as source of an action with respect to which an animate being is the undergoer (see (6)), or as undergoer of an action with respect to which an animate being is the source (see (7)). On the other hand, in a situation in which one inanimate being is seen as acting on another, the subject position may represent either the source or undergoer of the denoted action, as shown in (8):

- (8) a. 그 택시가 저 차를 쫓고 있어요.
 ki theksi-ka cə cha-lil ccoch-ko issəyo
 that taxi-Nom that car-Obj chasing is
 'The taxi is chasing the car.'
- b. 저 차가 그 택시에 쫓기고 있어요.
 cə cha-ka ki theksi-e ccoch-ki-ko issəyo
 that car-Nom that taxi-by chase-*hi*-ing is
 'The car is being chased by the taxi.'

In Korean it appears that the notion of actual or potential control of the sententially denoted action is a factor in the alternation between the marked and unmarked constructions. A comparison with English may be useful at this point. In English a source argument with greater theoretical control over the action can be represented as acting on an undergoer with lesser control, as in the sentence *John kicked the can*. On the other hand, the source argument can be one which has lesser theoretical control over the action in comparison with the undergoer, as in *The rock struck John*. It is also possible for the source and undergoer arguments to both have some theoretical control over the denoted action, as in *Joey kissed his auntie*, or no theoretical control at all, as in *This flag represents our country*. The question of control over the denoted activity is irrelevant to the active/passive alternation in English, as all the English sentences just considered readily passivize (*The can was kicked by John*, *John was struck by the rock*, *His auntie was kissed by Joey*, *Our country is represented by this flag*). In Korean, on the other hand, the notion of control or potential for control over a sententially denoted situation seems to be very much relevant to the alternation between the unmarked and marked constructions.

Let us begin examining the conditions under which a source argument in Korean can be construed as controlling a sententially denoted situation. Animacy seems to be a factor; in many situations an inanimate entity cannot be plausibly considered to control the action, particularly when the undergoer argument is animate. In such instances, the marked verbal construction may be preferred over the unmarked, as in (9)-(11):

- (9) a. *시간이 나를 쫓고 있어요.
 *sikan-i na-lil ccoch-ko issəyo = (6a)
 time-Nom I-Obj chasing is
 'Time is chasing me.'

- b. 나는 시간에 쫓기고 있어요.
 na-nin sikan-e ccoch-ki-ko issəyo = (6b)
 I-Nom topic time-by chase-*hi*-ing is (am)
 'I am being chased by time.'
- (10) a. *못이 그 천을 찢었다.
 *mos-i ki chən-il ccic-əssta
 nail-Nom that cloth-Obj tear-past
 'A/The nail tore the cloth.'
- b. 그 천이 못에 찢겼다.
 ki chən-i mos-e ccic-ki-əssta
 that cloth-Nom nail-by tear-*hi*-past
 'The cloth was torn by a/the nail.'
- (11) a. *돌이 나를 찼다.
 *tol-i na-lil cha-assta
 rock-Nom I-Obj kick-past
 'A/The rock kicked me.'
- b. 나는 돌에 차였다.
 na-nin tol-e cha-i-əssta
 I-Nom topic rock-by kick-*hi*-past
 'I was kicked by (I stumbled on) a/the rock.'

The preference for the marked construction in such instances serves to prevent subject position from being assigned to a source argument that lacks plausible control over the denoted act.

Unlike the cases just considered, however, there are situations in which an inanimate entity may be judged as controlling an action. When such is the case, although the undergoer of the action may be animate, its animacy and related potential for acting may be perceived as irrelevant to the situation. In such instances the unmarked construction, which imputes control over the denoted action to the source argument (by assigning it subject status), may be accepted alongside the marked verbal construction. Some examples are shown in (12)-(14).

- (12) a. 차가 전봇대를 받았다.
 cha-ka cənpostə-lil pat-assta
 car-Nom light pole-Obj strike-past
 'A/The car struck a/the light pole.'
- b. 전봇대가 차에 받혔다.
 cənpostə-ka cha-e pat-hi-əssta
 light pole-Nom car-by strike-*hi*-past
 'A/The light pole was struck by a/the car.'
- (13) a. 그 차가 그 사람을 받았다.
 ki cha-ka ki salam-il pat-assta
 that car-Nom that man-Obj strike-past
 'The car struck the man.'

- b. 그 사람이 그 차에 받았다.
 ki salam-i ki cha-e pat-hi-əssta
 that man-Nom that car-by strike-*hi*-past
 'The man was struck by the car.'
- (14) a. 그 차가 그 사람을 쫓았다.
 ki cha-ka ki salam-il ccoch-assta
 that car-Nom that man-Obj chase-past
 'The car chased the man.'
- b. 그 사람이 그 차에 쫓겼다.
 ki salam-i ki cha-e ccoch-ki-əssta
 that man-Nom that car-by chase-*hi*-past
 'The man was chased by the car.'

(13) and (14) suggest an analysis that the potential for action of the animate undergoer ('the man') is irrelevant to the depicted situation; in other words, the man's status in (13) and (14) is similar to that of the light pole in (12). In (13), although a man is animate and has volition and a car does not, the man undergoing the action is seen as inert relative to the action's source; that is, the man is viewed as powerless over a moving car which he himself is not driving. In (14), unlike (13), the undergoer of the action is presumably not immobile; nonetheless, in the depicted situation, he is viewed as lacking in control. The car as source of the action in (14), though inanimate, is viewed as totally in control.

Presently, our concern is to establish the conditions under which a source argument can be perceived as controlling action, and therefore assigned subject status in the unmarked construction. It has been shown that inert inanimate entities are generally not construed as controllers; whereas in a situation in which an inanimate entity is seen as acting on its own initiative, such as the car in (12)-(14), it may be construed as in control of an action. Now the more animate an entity, the greater its chances for being viewed as the controller of action. Whereas the marked verbal construction is obligatory in cases like (9)-(11), and alternates with the unmarked in cases like (12)-(14), it is generally unacceptable where the denoted situation involves a source argument which is animate acting on an undergoer which is inanimate. This is illustrated in (15):

- (15) a. 한(날아온) 새가 그 창문을 받았다.
 han (nalaon) se-ka ki chammun-il pat-assta
 one (flying) bird-Nom that window-Obj strike-past
 'A (flying) bird struck the window.'
- b. *그 창문이 한(날아온) 새에게 받았다.
 *ki chammun-i han (nalaon) se-eke pat-hi-əssta
 that window-Nom one (flying) bird-by strike-*hi*-past
 'The window was struck by a (flying) bird.'

Where a situation presupposes the control of an animate source entity, and the

undergoer is inanimate and inert, then the marked verbal construction is possible generally only if the source argument is left unspecified. In such an instance, the marked construction only serves to allow the sentential subject position to be occupied. This holds, for instance, in (16c). By comparison, (16b), where the controlling source of the action is specified but is not in subject position, is unacceptable.

- (16) a. 그가 그 판을 긁었어요.
 ki-ka ki phan-il kilk-əssəyo
 he-Nom that record-Obj scratch-past
 'He scratched the phonograph record.'
- b. *그 판이 그 남자에게 긁혔어요.
 *ki phan-i ki namca-eke kilk-hi-əssəyo
 that record-Nom that man-by scratch-hi-past
 'The phonograph record was scratched by the man.'
- c. 그 판이 (많이) 긁혔어요.
 ki phan-i (manhi) kilk-hi-əssəyo
 that record-Nom (much) scratch-hi-past
 'The phonograph record was (badly) scratched.'

The discussion so far suggests two functions or conditions associated with the marked/unmarked verbal alternation in Korean. In the first place the use of the unmarked verbal construction establishes the source argument as the perceived controller of the sententially denoted situation, and the choice of the marked construction over the unmarked (as in (9)-(11)) permits the dissociating of controller status from the source argument. Now the fact that the use of the unmarked construction ascribes control over an action to its source, over and above its undergoer, is a matter of Korean grammar. However, the analysis of a situation as being one in which the source has control over the undergoer is a matter of subjective judgement. This leads to some interesting variation among Korean speakers as to the grammaticality of specific instances. (17a) below, for instance, is rejected by most older (age 30 and above) Korean speakers I have consulted. Their reasoning is that, as a man is a higher being than a piece of machinery, the robot cannot do any such thing to a man as chase him. On the other hand, a younger speaker I consulted (age 21) claims (17a) is perfectly acceptable –because, as she says, a robot is like a man. Speakers of both the younger and older persuasion accept (17b).

- (17) a. 그 로봇가 저 사람을 쫓고 있어요.
 ki lopothi-ka cə salam-il ccoch-ko issəyo
 that robot-Nom that man-Obj chasing is
 'The robot is chasing the man.'
- b. 저 사람이 그 로봇에 (게) 쫓기고 있어요.
 cə salam-i ki lopothi-e(ke) ccoch-ki-ko issəyo
 that man-Nom that robot-by chase-hi-ing is
 'The man is being chased by the robot.'

It appears that older speakers analyze the situation in (17) as being of a kind with that in (9)-(11); while a trend is under way, and already observable in the habits of younger speakers, to analyze the situation of (17) as being of a kind with that in (12)-(14). The relative age of speakers, in other words, seems to be related to a difference in views on the relationship of men and machinery; and this difference in views appears to be reflected in the difference that younger speakers of Korean have with the grammar of their elders.

This brings us to the second function or condition associated with the choice between marked and unmarked verbal alternates. In the marked verbal construction, the undergoer of the action appears to be construed as having not less potential for controlling the action than the source argument, although the undergoer exercises no actual control over the situation.

At this point, we are no longer discussing conditions on what can serve as the subject argument in the unmarked verbal construction. We have already found that plausible control over the denoted situation must accrue to the subject of the unmarked construction. What we are now trying to establish are the conditions for the assignment of subject position to the *undergoer* of action in the *marked* construction. The most significant factor in this connection seems to be animacy. Where the undergoer argument is perceived as not less animate than the source argument, the undergoer accordingly has not less potential control over the situation than the source. If we stipulate that subject position in Korean typically represents the locus of actual or potential control over the sentimentally denoted situation, then it follows that inanimates are not preferred as subjects in the marked verbal construction; this has already been suggested in (16). Similarly it is significant that the same younger speaker who accepts (17a) above nonetheless rejects (18b) below, where the use of the marked verbal construction places an inanimate argument in sentential subject position.

- (18) a. 남자가 그 로봇을 쫓고 있어요.
 namca-ka ki lopothi-lil ccoch-ko issəyo
 man-Nom that robot-Obj chasing is
 'A/The man is chasing the robot.'
- b. ? 그 로봇가 남자에게 쫓기고 있어요.
 ?ki lopothi-ka namca-eke ccoch-ki-ko issəyo
 that robot-Nom man-by chase-*hi*-ing is
 'The robot is being chased by a/the man.'

This strongly suggests that animacy plays a conditioning role in the choice of sentential subject and the selection of the marked verbal construction as against the unmarked. Animate undergoer arguments are more likely than inanimates to be found in subject position in marked verbal constructions, as we have already seen in (9), (11), and (17b). An inanimate undergoer argument occurs in subject position in the marked construction only if the presupposed source is unspecified (as in (16c)) or is itself inanimate, as in (8), (10), and (12). Also, in the marked construction, the more animate an undergoer is relative to the source argument

in the same sentence, the more it seems to be perceived as belonging in subject position. Consider (19). In the (a) example, a lower animate is represented as acting on a higher animate; while in the (b) example, the higher animate is represented as acted on by the lower animate. Both (19a) and (19b) are held by Korean speakers to be acceptable; but (19b), in which the higher animate occupies subject position, is said to be acceptable; but (19b), in which the higher animate occupies subject position, is said to be preferable.

- (19) a. 개가 아이를 물었다.
 ke-ka ai-lil mul-əssta
 dog-Nom child-Obj bite-past
 ‘A/The dog bit a/the child.’
 b. 아이가 개에게 물렸다.
 ai-ka ke-eke mul-li-əssta
 child-Nom dog-by bite-*hi*-past
 ‘A/The child was bitten by a/the dog.’

So far we have established that the subject position in the unmarked construction is associated with a perception of the source argument as exercising actual control over the denoted situation; whereas subject position in the marked construction is associated with a perception of the undergoer argument as having at best potential, but not actual, control over the situation relative to the source argument. These generalizations allow us to predict when a marked construction may be preferred over an unmarked; when the converse may hold; or when either construction may be acceptable. Generally, the last obtains when both the source and the undergoer arguments in a sentence are animate –as in our very first example (5a,b) above. I am not convinced, however, that two alternates like (5a,b) are the same in meaning. As I said earlier, the marked verbal construction, in which an animate undergoer argument serves as grammatical subject, carries the presupposition that the undergoer is not less powerful than the source argument in the particular situation, yet exercises no actual control over the action. The last stipulated condition, “exercises no actual control over the action,” is important. For one thing, it explains the oddness of a marked verbal construction such as (20b). In the situation depicted here, the source and undergoer arguments have reference to the same person. (20b) is unacceptable, and in fact semantically deviant, because it represents the same person as both the controlling source of the situation and as the helpless undergoer thereof.

- (20) a. 그는 그의 머리를 긁었다.
 ki-nin ki-ii məli-lil kilk-əssta
 he-Nom topic his head-Obj scratch-past
 ‘He scratched his head.’
 b. *그의 머리가 그에게 긁혔다.
 *ki-ii məli-ka ki-eke kilk-*hi*-əssta
 his head-Nom he-by scratch-*hi*-past
 ‘His head was scratched by him.’

Now consider (21). (21a) and (21b) appear to express the same view of event or action and therefore would seem to be equivalent in meaning, but in fact are not. (21a) can mean either that the woman committed an accidental offense, i.e. injured the man, or that the man let the woman scratch his back, that is, to relieve its itching. (21b), on the other hand, is strongly predisposed toward the accident reading of (21a) and away from the voluntary undergoer reading. The reason for this is the same as mentioned in connection with (20b) above—in the marked verbal construction, the subject is viewed as failing to exercise control over the action in any way, including by cooperating in its accomplishment.

- (21) a. 그 여자가 저 사람의 등을 긁었다.
 ki yəca-ka cə salam-ii tiŋ-il kilk-əssta
 that woman-Nom that man's back-Obj scratch-past
 'The woman scratched the man's back.'
- b. 저 사람의 등이 그 여자에게 긁혔다.
 cə salam-ii tiŋ-i ki yəca-eki kilk-hi-əssta
 that man's back-Nom that woman-by scratch-*hi*-past
 'The man's back was scratched by the woman.'

That (21b) favors the accident reading over the voluntary undergoer reading becomes clearer if one adds a phrase such as 'for ten minutes'—see examples (22a,b). Here the second sentence, (22b), is distinctively odd compared to the first, because the inclusion of the phrase 'for ten minutes' prejudices one against the possibility that the denoted event could be some kind of accident from the undergoer's standpoint.

- (22) a. 그 여자가 저 사람의 등을 십 분 동안
 ki yəca-ka cə salam-ii tiŋ-il sip pun toŋan
 that woman-Nom that man's back-Obj ten minutes for
 긁었다.
 kilk-əssta
 scratch-past
 'The woman scratched the man's back for 10 minutes.'
- b. ?? 저 사람의 등이 그 여자에게 십 분 동안
 ?? cə salam-ii tiŋ-i ki yəca-eki sip pun toŋan
 that man's back-Nom that woman-by ten minutes for
 긁혔다.
 kilk-hi-əssta
 scratch-*hi*-past
 'The man's back was scratched by the woman for ten minutes.'

Before concluding the analysis, let me discuss two apparent counterinstances to it. I mentioned just before that the marked verbal form may be used to allow a higher animate to be represented as being acted on by a lower animate. But the opposite does not hold: when a source argument is animate and an undergoer in-

animate, the unmarked construction tends to be preferred over the marked; this is illustrated in (7) and (18) above. However, there seems to occur a class of potential exceptions to this generalization, as illustrated in examples (23) and (24). The (b) examples are no less acceptable than the (a) examples:

- (23) a. 그는 그 것을 잊지 못 한다.
 ki-nin ki kəs-il ic-ci mos hanta
 he-Nom topic that thing-Obj forget-nominalizer not-can do
 ‘He is not forgetting that thing.’
- b. 그 것은 그에게 잊히지 않는다.
 ki kəs-in ki-eke ic-hi-ci anh-ninta
 that thing-Nom topic he-by forget-*hi*-nominalizer is-not
 ‘That thing is not being forgotten by him.’
- (24) a. 밤 마다 그는 이상한 소리를 듣는다.
 pam mata ki-nin isanhan soli-lil tit-ninta
 night every he-Nom topic strange sound-Obj hears
 ‘Every night he hears a strange sound.’
- b. 밤 마다 그에게 이상한 소리가 들린다.
 pam mata ki-eke isanhan soli-ka til-li-nta
 night every he-by strange sound-Nom hear-*hi*-s
 ‘Every night a strange sound is heard by him.’

I believe these apparent counterinstances to the analysis are just that: I do not think they are true exceptions. The question of whether the source or undergoer has greater actual or potential control in a situation only arises when the action itself is of a controllable nature. But forgetting and hearing, the actions depicted in (23) and (24) respectively, are not actions one thinks of as coming under anyone’s or anything’s control at all. This being the case, there is no need to evaluate the relative actual and potential control of the source and undergoer arguments; hence there is no need for choosing between the unmarked and marked constructional alternates. This explains, I think, the fact that both the (a) and (b) alternates in (23) and (24) are acceptable.

If there are some actions which are, in realistic terms, uncontrollable, one may wonder whether some actions may be seen as controllable in certain situations and noncontrollable in others. This brings me to a second group of apparent counterexamples to the analysis. Consider examples (25) and (26).

- (25) a. 전 세계의 모슬람 교인들이 아랍어로 쓴 코란을
 cən sekye-ii mosillam kyointil-i alapəlo ssin kholan-il
 whole world’s Muslim believers-Nom Arabic written Koran-Obj
 읽는다.
 ilk-ninta
 read
 ‘Muslims all over the world read the Arabic Koran.’

- b. 아랍어로 쓴 코란은 전 세계의 모슬람
 alapəlo ssin kholan-in cən sekye-ii mosillam
 Arabic written Koran-Nom topic whole world's Muslim
 교인들에게 읽힌다.
 kyointil-eke ilk-hi-nta
 believers-by read-*hi*-s
 'The Arabic Koran is read by Muslims all over the world.'

- (26) a. 미국인들은 영어를 씁니다.
 mikukintil-in yəŋə-lil ssi-pnita
 American-Nom topic English-Obj use
 'Americans use English.'
 b. 영어는 미국인들에게 쓰입니다.
 yəŋə-nin mikukintil-eke ssi-i-pnita
 English-Nom topic Americans-by use-*hi*-s
 'English is used by Americans.'

(25) and (26) appear to violate the analysis for the same reason that (23) and (24) appear to: in the (b) examples, an inanimate is presented as acted on by an animate. Moreover, unlike the actions depicted in (23) and (24), those depicted in (25) and (26) are basically controllable or voluntary actions. However, notice that in such examples the action is not presented as a discrete event or deed. The activities in (25)–(26) are depicted as processes; and as such, their source arguments are designated as generic classes rather than as specific individuals. When the same activities are presented not as processes but as deeds attributable to specific sources, the marked construction becomes unacceptable —as seen in the (b) examples of (27) and (28) (compare, respectively, (25b) and (26b)):

- (27) a. 그는 코란을 아랍어로 읽는다.
 ki-nin kholan-il alapəlo ilk-ninta
 he-Nom topic Koran-Obj in-Arabic reads
 'He reads the Arabic Koran.'
 b. *코란이 그에게 아랍어로 읽힌다.
 *kholan-i ki-eke alapəlo ilk-hi-nta
 Koran-Nom he-by in-Arabic read-*hi*-s
 'The Arabic Koran is read by him.'
 (28) a. 나의 선생님이 영어를 써요.
 na-ii sənseŋnim-i yəŋə-lil ss-əyo
 I's teacher-Nom English-Obj uses
 'My teacher uses English.'

- b. *영어는 나의 선생님께 쓰여요.
 *yɛŋə-nin na-ii sɛnsɛŋnim-eke ssi-i-əyo
 English-Nom topic I-'s teacher-by use-*hi*-s
 'English is used by my teacher.'

What I think is going on in generic expressions like (25b) and (26b) is that it is the action *qua* action which is of interest, rather than the relation of any potentially controlling argument to the action. It seems that, accordingly, the notion of control is irrelevant to generic expressions; and this would suggest why they are not subject to the usual constraints on the selection of subject in sentence with marked and unmarked verbal alternates.

The constraints on subject assignment and on the selection between the marked and unmarked verbal stem constructions in Korean can be summarized as follows:

- A. If the sentential verb has both unmarked and marked stem alternates, the unmarked construction may be selected, provided that the source argument is perceived as exercising effective control over the denoted situation.
- B. Under the same conditions as in (A), the marked construction may be selected, provided that the undergoer argument is perceived as possessing a potential of control in the denoted situation not inferior to the effective control associated with the source argument; at the same time, the undergoer must be perceived as participating in the action in the absence of any initiative to actually control, or direct, the action.
- C. Where the assignment of control over the sententially denoted action is irrelevant to the action as depicted, and the sentential verb has both unmarked and marked stem alternates, then there is no semantic basis for preferring one over the other.

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Division of Linguistics
 La Trobe University
 Bundoora Victoria
 Australia 3083